



# from the nstu executive director

## Annual Council Remarks

*(Excerpt from Bethany MacLeod's Address to Annual Council 2026)*

Hello everyone,

Have you ever had those moments when you say, "Who would have thought?" I am experiencing that right now. My union involvement began almost 20 years ago as a school representative. I first took on the role of treasurer with my association, then assistant coordinator and ended as coordinator (Local President). I was hooked! I then moved on to various positions on the Provincial Executive, and in 2015 was elected President of the Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation. I served as president for four years and then was elected President Designate for the Canadian Teachers' Federation. But before I moved to Ottawa, the newly elected Premier called me up and asked if I would serve as the Deputy Minister of Education. I said, "I will accept the appointment, but know that I will continue to advocate for teachers. His reply was, "That's why I want you." My time in government was eye-opening, but I had many opportunities to educate decision makers on what it was like to be a teacher. Eyes would widen when I explained what it was like to teach a classroom of 30 plus students with 25 individualized learning plans. I know it may be difficult to believe, but sometimes in Government, classroom realities were often minimized. I learned so much during my time with government. My experience with government helped prepare me to now serve as your Executive Director. To be back serving teachers, this is where my heart truly belongs. We have important work ahead—strengthening advocacy, protecting professional voice, and ensuring classroom realities guide every decision. That work includes preparing for our upcoming collective bargaining, focused on improving the supports and working conditions our educators need and rightfully deserve.

Congratulations again to President Day, who will serve another term as your President. He has been a huge support to me, and his wealth of experience/history with NSTU has made him an invaluable mentor. You have a President who does not back down when pressure is needed, and he is not afraid to speak up for the rights of members and the advancement of public education. He has made progress with government relations and been able to

bring about changes because he provides a clear picture of what members are experiencing in their classrooms. His advocacy and dedication to Nova Scotia teachers is inspiring.

Thank you to the 2025/2026 Provincial Executive who work tirelessly on your behalf and bring forward your concerns and challenges. They are passionate and committed, and do not hesitate to advocate for improved working conditions for members and learning conditions for students. Our 22 locals and their presidents who never stop speaking up for members. We have asked for information on numerous occasions and used this to support and validate our discussions and negotiations with Government. Thank you for that; they can never dispute the facts. I would be remiss if I didn't also recognize and applaud our

21 professional associations for the incredible work they do supporting members throughout the year and especially October Conference.

Our NSTU team, I would like to sincerely thank the dedicated staff of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. Every day, you work behind the scenes to support our members with professionalism, care, and unwavering commitment. Your expertise, responsiveness, and belief in public education make a real difference in the lives of teachers and students across this province. Our strength as a union is built on your efforts, and we are deeply grateful

for all that you do. You have been welcoming and supportive, and very patient throughout my transition as executive director.

The most important thank you is to ALL of you. Thank you to every educator in this room for the care, commitment, and heart you bring to your work each day. You show up for students in ways that often go unseen but never go unnoticed. The impact you make reaches far beyond the classroom—you are shaping lives, futures, and communities. I saw a saying the other day, "*The true measure of teaching isn't in lessons delivered, but in lives changed.*" All of us in this room have a teacher who made a difference in our lives.

My door is always open, and I am only an email or a phone call away, please do not hesitate to reach out if you need anything. If I do not know the answer, I will find someone who does. I am truly humbled and honoured to serve as your Executive Director, and I promise to work tirelessly to advocate for your voices, your professionalism, and the values that guide your work every day in Nova Scotia schools and communities. Thank you.



*Muin Paul performs the Honour Song at Council 2026*